

In spite of such criticisms, the book is by far the best presentation of the subject available. I have found it of great value in assessing my own work and in learning new lines of approach. It should be of interest to all analysts as a child of the individual treatment situation for whom this book may mark a coming of age.

R. D. Scott

K. DABROWSKI: **Positive disintegration**, edited by J. Aronson. London, Churchill, 1964. pp. 132. 40s.

Professor Dabrowski is Director of the Institute of Child Psychiatry and Mental Hygiene in the Polish Academy of Science. He studied child psychiatry under Piaget and had a year's analysis with Stekel before returning to Warsaw and Pavlovian influences. The message of the book is simply that psychiatric symptoms and syndromes, including neuroses and psychoses, tend to occur at times of crisis and usually lead to further development of the character. Hence the term positive disintegration. This outcome is more common than that resulting from negative disintegration, namely failure to develop or retrogression. Feelings of anxiety, depression, shame and guilt and periods of self-scrutiny, far from being pathological, are essential features of normal development.

Dabrowski conceives of personality and character as built up of successive, super-imposed levels of integration in the same way that Jackson conceived of the central nervous system. He uses the metaphor of higher versus lower in moral, ethical, political, autogenic, phylogenetic, personal-historical and neuroanatomical contexts in an indiscriminate way which, combined with the repetitious, over-abstract and often badly translated text, makes for difficult reading. Aronson's excellent introduction is therefore welcome. Case histories inserted at Aronson's instigation do not help much, though they do indicate the warmth and delicacy of Dabrowski's approach to patients.

Aronson compares his ideas with the crisis theory of Lindemann and with Erikson's view of the successive conflicts confronting the developing individual. We may also mention Fordham's concept of deintegration versus disintegration. He defines deintegration as the division of the self which occurs at all times but especially at developmental crises. Where serious ego disturbances are involved, the term disintegration would be used. Thus, Dabrowski's positive disintegration would include Fordham's deintegration plus ego disturbances.

Dabrowski introduces the concept of a 'disposing and directing centre' which seems to have attributes both of the ego and self of analytical psychology. It leads him to an interesting typology. In the 'primitive integration type', the centre is at a low level and is impulsive in nature. Life stresses, even tragedies, produce mild or no symptoms of disintegration with no transformation of psychic structure. Psychopaths, careerists, and most ordinary people come under this heading. The 'positive disintegration type' has anxiety and dissatisfaction concerning himself and his values; he has depth of character, a rich emotional memory, and is consciously aware of and capable of mobilizing personal and social ideals. The 'chronic disintegration type' shows oscillation between competing dynamisms and is incapable of decisive behaviour. The 'pathological disintegration type' shows a predominance of destructive processes, the sphere of consciousness diminishes and there is a progressive loss of creative capacities.

The book demonstrates how Dabrowski has sought to broaden a mechanistic approach to cover the phenomena he observes. One suspects that in his practical work he makes use of Western diagnostic practices and child guidance methods. A visit to his clinics would be most interesting.

Joseph Redfearn